



An Awareness Story for Doctors

SOAR UP WITH DOWNS:

Your Child has a Bright Future

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This is a **Situational Dialogue** exchanged between *a couple* and *a Doctor*.

Narrator: *The couple are filled with fear and anxiety as they expect their child's delivery. The fully pregnant lady is taken to the labor room, but after some time the Obstetrician comes out and explains that due to fetal distress, the baby needs to be delivered by operation.*

Mother: How is my baby? Is he good?

Doctor: I will speak to your husband. You have a boy!

(She goes out with the child from the operation theater.)

Doctor: A baby boy is born to you, but I am sorry! He has Down Syndrome.

(Father starts crying and starts questioning the Doctor.)

Father: What is Down Syndrome? What will be his future like?

Doctor: Your child is abnormal. He will be weak physically and mentally. He will never be able to speak or learn. He will be sick all the time and have all sorts of health problems.

(A devastated father is fallen apart by this news; he walks to and fro restlessly and is filled with numerous questions about what he and his wife should, what will their families think about the child and so on.)

All doctors must remember that this is the birth of a child which is an incredibly special moment. **The birth of a child always calls for celebration.** If you look like it is the end of the world, the parents will feel the same. **That is not true.** It is the grand moment of the beautiful new baby who is eager to meet his new parents. So as doctors, you have to put a wide smile on your face, and help them understand what causes a child to be born with Down Syndrome. This is very important as some mothers think it is their “fault” that their child has Down Syndrome, and that they may have done something wrong to cause it.



As Doctors, you are expected to say

Doctor: Your cute baby boy has Down Syndrome. He has an extra chromosome making it 47 instead of 46 as in a normal child. Now, there are countless resources available to help people with Down Syndrome reach their full potential. Today, people with Down Syndrome go to school, have careers, are public speakers, play musical instruments, and live independently. Try to find organizations or parents' support groups where you can interact with other parents with a child with Down Syndrome. Share your concerns and get ideas to raise your child better.

Narrator: *A few years later...*

The boy got the accurate treatment, love, care and is now leading a dignified, independent life of adolescence with the help of his dedicated parents, the support and advice of the understanding family and friends.

It is important that we paint an **accurate picture** of what their child's life could be like. When we took the Hippocratic Oath, we swore that we would use our knowledge wisely. We should not use this power and influence to scare someone or to make a world of darkness. **Give them hope, not fear.**

People fear the unknown, and Down Syndrome will likely be an unknown for a lot of the parents who receive the news. It is our job to help make some of the unknown known, and by doing so carefully remove their fear so they can walk forward in hope. Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. We should be sensitive to the feelings of the parents of the newborn child.

EMPATHY and LOVE changes the lives of children with Down Syndrome.